



THE ART OF FISHING

THE ART OF THE RELEASE RIG

It's common to lose more than half of contacts when fishing for predators with lures. But a new method can double that catch rate

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WITH THE RELEASE RIG YOU CAN FISH TWO HOOKS ALONG THE END AND SIDE OF THE LURE THAT DANGLE PERFECTLY EXPOSED – THE FISH BARELY NEEDS TO THINK OF TAKING THE BAIT BEFORE IT IS HOOKED

In traditional lure

fishing, the size of the hook is dictated by the size of the lure: the hooks need to be big enough for their points to be well exposed. This means that most lures are fished with hooks sized 6–8 and over – in other words, much stronger than they need to be in order to catch the fish you are after.

In my opinion, one of the biggest problems in modern lure fishing is that with hooks of this size, you stand a very poor chance of getting a grip in the hard parts in the predator's mouth with the pressure you are able to put on your hook when striking. This is because, no matter how sharp the hooks are, the wire is so thick that proper penetration to a point below the barb is very difficult. And the leverage effect makes it very easy for the fish to get rid of a poorly penetrated hook from its jawbone just by shaking its head.

THE RELEASE RIG

In order to solve this problem, I developed the release rig. In my experience, with small, sharp trebles from size 12 and smaller with a wire diameter under 0.7mm, you can get a good grip in the jawbone with normal spinning equipment on trout and salmon, among other fish. But hooks of this size cannot be fished with the normal split-ring mounting because the hook points would be badly exposed – they would be in the shadow of the large lure. And if you used such small hooks mounted the normal way, the leverage effect would put too much stress on the hook, resulting in potential breakage or lost hook hold.

So if you want to make proper use of the superior penetration and hook hold advantages that small, sharp, thin trebles give, you need to mount the hooks in a completely different way – so that they are well exposed asymmetrically off the main body on the lure. You also need to have a construction that is completely free of any leverage effect. →



The variant of the release rig I describe here was originally made for fishing with in-line lures on the Danish coast for sea trout, but it would be just as effective for lure fishing for any other predators, such as sea bass, salmon, perch, pike and zander.

GREAT EXPOSURE AND NO LEVERAGE EFFECT

With the release rig, you can fish two hooks along the end and side of the lure that dangle perfectly exposed, so that the fish barely needs to think of taking the bait before it is hooked. During cast and retrieve, the hooklink is semi-fixed at the end of the rig, but when hooking a fish, the lure is shaken off the hooklink and allowed to slide freely up the trace or mainline. This not only totally eliminates the leverage effect, but also prevents any centrifugal power, created by the swinging of the heavy lure to make the hook-wounds so big that they might cause the hooks to fall out. In contrast to traditional in-line lures, which cause many leverage problems even before they actually start to slide, the lure on release-rig slides is attached/slides at only one point and will never give any sort of leverage effect – even before sliding up the line. When fishing for sea

trout with normal in-line lures, you often lose 40–50 per cent of your contacts, but with the release rig you will be able to land 90–95 per cent of them when you have learnt to tie the rig correctly – and when you are confident with the method. In other words, your catch rate will almost double because you'll rarely lose a fish.

HOW TO MODIFY YOUR IN-LINE LURE

- [1]** Take a plastic pearl and burn a small collar in each end. You now have a release bead.
- [2]** Tie a 20cm piece of 0.2mm braid around the bead with a grinner knot.
- [3]** Slide a small, hard bead on to the braid to ensure free rotation of the lure.
- [4]** Push the piece of braid up through the in-line lure from behind.
- [5]** Tie a 1.5mm Nash rig ring to the braid, so that it ends up approximately 1cm from the top of the lure. Pull the knot tight with the help of a hook, then make an extra knot on top and secure with a drop of Superglue. Your in-liner is now release ready.

HOW TO MAKE THE RELEASE RIG

- [6]** Cut a 1m piece of 0.33-0.37 Ace Riverge Fluorocarbon. Tie a size 12–14

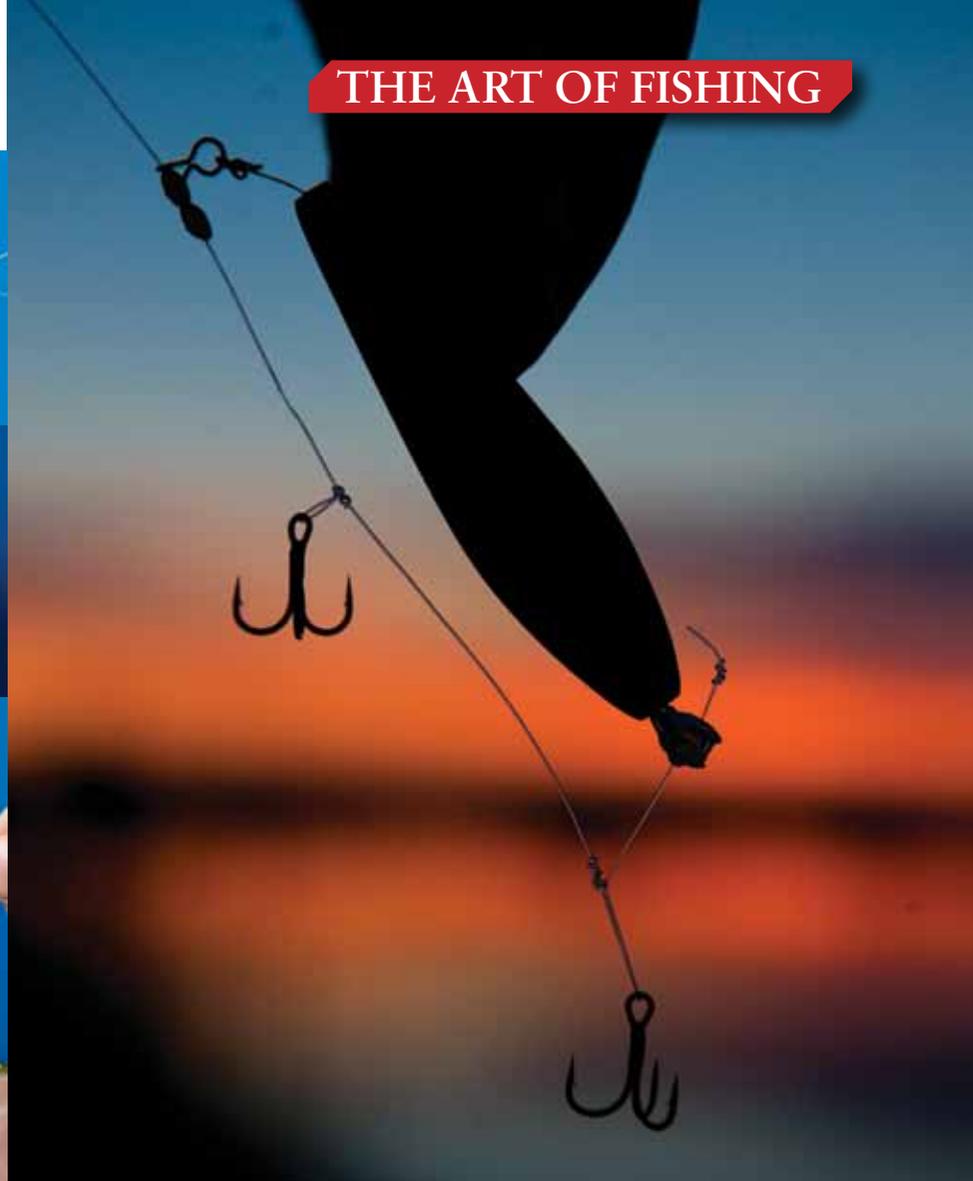
WHEN FISHING FOR SEA TROUT WITH NORMAL IN-LINE LURES, YOU OFTEN LOSE 40-50 PER CENT OF YOUR CONTACTS, BUT WITH THE RELEASE RIG YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LAND 90-95 PER CENT

Owner ST36BC X or smaller to the start of a blood loop with five turns.

[7] Split the middle turn open with your thumbnail and drag the hook through. Moisten the knot and pull it tight while adjusting the size of the loop.

[8] Tie the start of a rapala knot 5–7cm from the first knot. Thread a size 12 hook on the end of the trace and push the end of the trace through the centre of the rapala knot.

[9] Turn the end of the trace four times around the hooklink and back through the centre of the rapala knot. Moisten the knot and tighten it by pulling the end of the trace with your teeth while fixing the centre of



the knot with your fingers so that the knot maintains its position relative to the first knot. If you've tied it correctly, you will have an angle of 90 degrees at the centre of the knot between the hooklink and the end of the trace. This is important for the correct exposure of the end hook.

[10] Mount a soft silicone stopper – a medium Zebco silicone stopper – on the end of the trace. Tie a three-four double knot on the end of the trace at the point. When fishing, the silicone stopper is pushed into the release-bead, semi-fixing the hooklink under the lure. The knot is made to secure the stopper from sliding off the end of the trace, when the lure is shaken off the hooklink and the fight begins. Leave 5mm trace behind the knot, so that it is easier to remount the stopper into the release bead with cold hands.

[11] Mount two hard float stops, for example small Drennan float stops, in front of the front hook, and in front of

this a snap lock, for example a size-one Mustad 771.45. By pushing the stops backwards or forwards along the trace, you can adjust the rig for different sizes of lures. Adjusting the distance between lure and hooklink is done in the same way – combined with adjustment of the stopper inside the release bead.

[12] If you have an aggressive casting style or are fishing lures over 25 grams, you need to have a fixed stop between hooklink and trace – here a 1,5 mm Nash Rig-ring

[13] Connect the fluorocarbon trace to the braided mainline with a 1,5 mm Nash Rigging.

[14] The release rig can also be used for normal non-inline metal spoons – but if free rotation is needed for correct movements of the specific lure, you need to tie the center of a ball-bearing swivel between the end of the lure and the release-bead. Also attach a full ball bearing swivel in the front, where you mount the snapper. ■